



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE **108th** CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 149

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2003

No. 75

House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 20, 2003.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN BOOZMAN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 25 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate extend beyond 9:50 a.m.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

DOD EXEMPTIONS

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I came to Congress with the goal to promote more livable communities, that the Federal Government should be a better partner with the State and local governments, with private sector to make our families safe, healthy and economically secure. My colleagues can imagine my dismay when this week we are given a proposal in the Defense reauthorization bill that is the

antithesis of this nature of partnership to promote livable communities.

It would exempt the military, not just the military actually, but all Federal agencies from certain aspects of the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act. The bill includes a proposal that eliminates critical habitat designation altogether on all lands owned or controlled by the military.

The bill includes a rider to exempt the Department of Defense at Fort Huachuca in Arizona from any responsibility for off-base ground water pumping that threatens the existence of the San Pedro River.

Mr. Speaker, this outrageous provision that was included in the reauthorization comes less than a month after the Secretary of the Army gave the fort an environmental award for solving it, and now Congress is going to undo this in the reauthorization.

The United States is the wealthiest and most powerful Nation in the world. Our Armed Forces are the most able, the best equipped, the finest fighting force, and they are people that can get the job done. We ought to be able to figure out how to address real problems with the environment without compromising the survival of what we are fighting to protect.

The legislation is unnecessary on so many different levels. First of all, there is already a waiver provision that has been in these laws for years. If there is a military necessity to waive environmental regulations, there is a provision that is available. There has never been an instance of military necessity where a waiver has been requested and not granted, never, not once.

It also misses a real threat to military readiness, what the military and those who are studying the issue term "encroachment." The same sprawl and unplanned growth that threatens farm and forest lands, pollutes our air and

water, and congests our roadways is a real threat to the ability to train and maintain the world's mightiest fighting force. Across the country, from Fort Stewart, Georgia, to Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada, development is threatening the Armed Forces' ability to fly planes, maneuver and conduct other readiness activities.

The State of California has recognized this and has worked out legislation with the Department of Defense to deal with the long-term operations of military installations to provide the military, environmental organizations, and local planning agencies the tools to work together to fight problems of sprawl and unplanned growth. This is ignored by the legislation before us.

It is also wrong on a fundamental level. It is missing the opportunity to use the Department of Defense to set the highest standards because we know, given adequate resources and the right orders, they can achieve any mission, and we should use this opportunity.

Finally, there is a fundamental arrogance and hypocrisy that the Federal Government's rules and regulations are necessary to protect the environment and will impose among small business, will impose among local government that we will not hold ourselves to that standard. That hypocrisy runs against the grain. It is obnoxious to people in the real world. It ought to be abhorrent to the people in this chamber. We ought to have the Federal Government lead by example.

In order to win the battle to protect the world's environment, we ought to provide some leadership, and a critical part of leadership in this country has always been the military. To send them a signal that environmental stewardship does not matter and they do not have to play by the rules is the wrong signal for them and the rest of America, and it is certainly the wrong

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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